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STATEMENT BY THE MOST REVEREND DR PETER CARNLEY AO
ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP OF PERTH AND PRIMATE OF AUSTRALIA
IN RESPONSE TO THE PURPORTED CONSECRATION OF THE REVEREND
DAVID CHISLETT IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In response to reported ecclesial developments in the United States of America in which Australian Anglicans have an interest I wish to make the following points:

1. As I understand it, the Reverend David Chislett, Rector of the Parish of All Saints, Wickham Terrace in the Diocese of Brisbane, was consecrated a bishop in the Traditional Anglican Communion at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Rosemount, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. on 16 February 2005.
2. The Anglican Church of Australia is not in communion with the member churches of the Traditional Anglican Communion and there is no ecumenical concordat of inter-communion or of interchangeability of ministries between us. There is therefore no constitutional or canonical provision for licensing a person occupying an ordained or consecrated office in the Traditional Anglican Communion for ministry within the Anglican Church of Australia. It seems, therefore, that the Reverend David Chislett has left the Anglican Church of Australia to join the Traditional Anglican Communion.
3. This new development is disappointing to me, as only a month ago, accompanied by the Archbishop of Brisbane and the Bishop of Newcastle, I met in good faith with representatives of Forward in Faith and the Traditional Anglican Communion (The Most Reverend John Hepworth, the Reverend David Robarts and the Reverend David Chislett himself) at the General Synod office in Sydney. At that meeting it was agreed that informal talks should be continued to discuss a canonical and constitutional way of providing extended Episcopal ministry to members of Forward in Faith. This meeting was marked by a very high degree of goodwill. It is a pity that the positive promise of these first discussions has now been prematurely cut off.
4. It may well be possible to find an acceptable way for a bishop or assistant bishop to minister to conservatively minded Anglicans in their dioceses under protocols similar to those under which the Bishop to the Australian Defence Force ministers to Defence Force personnel and to the way in which our indigenous bishops minister to groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia.
5. There are, however, constitutional and canonical procedures in place in the Anglican Church of Australia which govern the creation of offices for bishops and assistant bishops. These procedures have not been followed in this case.

6. All Australian bishops are sworn to uphold the Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church of Australia.
7. It is disappointing to me that the Reverend David Chislett has apparently felt it necessary to leave the Anglican Church of Australia to join the Traditional Anglican Communion and be consecrated a bishop off-shore within it. He might have helped us to find a way to minister to Forward in Faith people within the Anglican Church of Australia. However I wish him well in his future ministry within the Traditional Anglican Communion.
8. Finally, I think the development at Rosemont, Pennsylvania should prompt us all to reflect theologically upon the very idea that a person may be consecrated a bishop in a vacuum, in independence of the existence of an actual office and without canonically authorized electoral procedures. Consecration and ordination to Episcopal ministry is not a personal possession but involves the authorization of a person for the exercise of a role within the people of God. No dichotomy can be drawn between being and function, for issues of relationality are integral to priestly and Episcopal identity. The idea of a priest isolated from the exercise of priestly ministry within the community or a bishop isolated from a shepherding role within the people of God is highly irregular and theologically questionable. The purported consecration of a bishop without an office within which to function may be little more than shadow boxing. Catholic minded Anglicans should be amongst those most sensitively alert to these matters.